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Official Records

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Tuesday, 9 June 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Announcement

The President: Before I give the floor to the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to draw attention to a number of issues that we are facing in the General Assembly Hall.

Numerous delegations have been letting their cellular phones ring in the General Assembly Hall while a meeting is in progress. Several delegations — not to mention the President of the General Assembly himself — are unhappy with this and have expressed their displeasure, since the ringing of telephones while the debate is going on is disruptive to the orderly conduct of the meetings. In this regard, I should like to urge those delegations to turn off their cellular telephones ringers while in the General Assembly Hall. An instruction to that effect was issued also for the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, and I would be very grateful to delegations for complying with this request.

I have also noticed that while the general debate is in progress, members of some delegations have taken flash photographs of the person making a statement. Not only is this disruptive, but it is also against established security practices. In this connection, I should like to remind members that a photographer from the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat takes pictures of all the speakers in any debate for the photo archives. These pictures can be obtained from the Photo Section of the Department of Public Information. However, if participants wish to ensure that a picture is taken of a member of a delegation, they may contact the Photo Section directly, or inform a Conference Officer. The Conference Officer will make the necessary arrangements.

Since several Member States have expressed concern about these issues, and in order to conduct our meetings in a more orderly fashion, I have considered it necessary to bring these matters to the attention of the General Assembly. I count on the support of all participants with regard to the conduct of the plenary meetings of the Assembly.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: The first speaker on my list today is His Excellency Mr. Kubanychbek Jumaliev, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Jumaliev (Kyrgyzstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Allow me, on behalf of the delegation of sovereign Kyrgyzstan, on behalf of Mr. Askar Akayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, and in my personal capacity, to express deep gratitude to the entire international community for convening this special session of the General Assembly on the drug problem.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I fully share and support the concern and alarm expressed in preceding statements relating to the control of narcotic drugs and their precursors, as well the views on the strengthening of international cooperation in combating the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and ever-increasing distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and of their constituent elements.

The situation with respect to drug smuggling in the Kyrgyz Republic is currently marked by rampant growth, which is determined by the following factors: the transit of Afghan opium, via Tajikistan, into the territory of Kyrgyzstan, and its subsequent delivery to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe; the existence in the territory of the Republic of considerable areas where hemp with a high tetrahydrocannabinol content and *Ephedra sinica* grow wild; and emerging new ways of synthesizing drugs, including from chemical reagents.

We are taking all possible steps to ensure the implementation of the well-known international conventions on the control of narcotics, to which we acceded in the spring of 1994. The necessary legislative base is being established in relation to the legal and illegal trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors. National lists of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors are being successfully employed, and the export and import of these items, as well as their manufacture and production, can be conducted only on the basis of a licensing system. In April of this year, Kyrgyzstan was one of the first countries in Central Asia to adopt a special act on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, which, along with our new criminal code, regulates all aspects of the legal and illegal trade.

In order to implement our national policy in the field of narcotics control, and in accordance with the provisions of the 1961, 1971 and 1988 United Nations Conventions, Kyrgyzstan was the first of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States to establish within its Government, five years ago now, a special organ, the State Narcotics Control Commission, which has been given sufficiently broad powers in this sphere. Furthermore, combating and controlling the legal and illegal traffic in narcotic drugs are among the daily tasks assigned to the Ministries of Internal Affairs, National Security and Health, and the State Customs Committee.

From the time Kyrgyzstan became independent, we have pursued a policy of developing and strengthening broad regional and international cooperation in specific areas, including the control of narcotic drugs. We have concluded agreements with a number of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States and with other Asian and European States — Germany, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Czech Republic — as well as with prestigious international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, organs of the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and many others. Kyrgyzstan was also an initiator of the establishment in 1997 of the International Drug Control Commission of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

At the same time, it must be noted that despite the steps we have taken, the drug situation continues to deteriorate. This is the result of a whole series of internal and external causes and factors. One major factor is the complex domestic political situation in neighbouring States. A steady flow of drugs, weapons, forcibly displaced persons and refugees passes through Gorny Badakhshan in transit to Kyrgyzstan and other States of the Central Asian region — and from them into the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Europe and even the United States of America. The Republic of Kyrgyzstan is a major source of the raw materials for hashish addicts. This is largely the result of the environment and climate of Kyrgyzstan, which are conducive to the growth of wild cannabis, which has overrun a considerable area of the Republic's territory. In combination with the inadequate standard of living, this has led whole families into the criminal narcotics business. In this connection, one important area of cooperation could be the participation of donor countries in conducting large-scale scientific studies of environmentally sound methods of destroying wild cannabis.

There is serious concern in Kyrgyzstan regarding the new phenomenon of illegal trafficking in the powerful synthetic stimulant ephedrone, which is produced both from medicinal forms containing ephedrine and from the plant *ephedra sinica*, which grows abundantly in the Republic. The main danger is that it can be synthesized at home using fairly primitive technology.

The problem of the spread of drugs has recently become so acute that without substantial donor support and additional assistance Kyrgyzstan and the other States of the subregion may find themselves in a difficult and unpredictable situation. We urgently need to develop and undertake a range of special programmes on the following topics: reducing demand for drugs; improving the control of precursors; training staff who will be able to do this control work; developing and harmonizing national legislation in the Central Asian States in order to have a coordinated approach to solving the problem; and acquiring equipment for the efficient analysis of precursors at customs control points.

In our constantly changing world, I call upon the entire international community to unite their efforts and capabilities to combat the spread of drugs and their destructive socio-economic consequences, in close interaction and cooperation with international organizations. In today's world this problem cannot be solved by the efforts of any one State alone. A strengthening of common efforts at the regional, subregional and international levels is required.

This special session is of very great significance for the Organization. I hope and believe that in the face of the danger to the whole of mankind posed by the worldwide spread of narcotics, the interests of all countries will coincide and that decisions will be taken towards achieving a positive solution to these problems that trouble the entire world.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Panday (Trinidad and Tobago): I salute the historic role you are playing, Sir, in presiding over the deliberations of this unique special session of the General Assembly devoted to combating the global plague of drugs.

I also wish at the outset to pay tribute to the President of Mexico, Mr. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, and to the Government of Mexico, for the Mexican Government's initiative, which led to the holding of this special session of the Assembly.

In my address to the General Assembly at its fifty-first regular session, in 1996, I drew attention to the fact that traditional national and international structures were becoming increasingly inadequate to deal with the current global realities and that nation States were being confronted with the need to find acceptable means to yield elements of their sovereignty in order to deal effectively with forces and problems that were transnational in nature.

I identified, then, drug abuse and drug-trafficking as one of the key transnational problems which poses a particular threat to the stability and integrity of our societies and as a problem that requires an effective and concerted response at the national, regional and international levels.

Let me also recall that in 1989, when the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, The Honourable Arthur Napoleon Robinson, moved to revive the interest of the United Nations in the establishment of a permanent international criminal court, this was in part a recognition of the gravity of this scourge against humanity and the need to address it effectively at an international level.

Trinidad and Tobago has not been immune to the pervasive and debilitating effects of the drug problem. Indeed, along with the associated problem of organized crime, it poses a grave threat to our economic and social development, as well as to our political stability. Our twin-island Republic is particularly vulnerable, lying as it does at the southernmost point of the Caribbean chain of islands, a mere seven miles from the South American continent, and therefore within easy reach of some of the major cocaine-producing areas.

Trinidad and Tobago is also part of the Caribbean basin, which encompasses 3 million square kilometres, through which hundreds of small fishing vessels, cargo and cruise ships, yachts and pleasure craft transit daily. In 1997, for example, it was estimated that 893 vessels traversed our territorial waters on a daily basis. When we consider the potential here for drug traffickers to ply their trade and the enormity of the effort required to monitor and police this maritime traffic effectively, we get an idea of the magnitude of the task that confronts us.

The metamorphosis of the illicit trade over the last decade has created new and complex problems for our region. We are experiencing a resultant rise in serious crimes. The unemployed population is being exploited by the trafficking organizations, both as an available labour force and a consumer market. We have also witnessed in

our country a dramatic escalation in the drug addiction rate, particularly among our young adult population. Increasingly, we are being called upon to divert additional resources away from other, more pressing developmental needs to deal with the eradication of drugs and its symbiosis with the culture of poverty.

This is the stark reality faced by Trinidad and Tobago as a result of the growing menace of the illicit drug trade and organized crime.

However, it is not a problem unique to Trinidad and Tobago. Every country is affected by the scourge of drugs, which is threatening the future of our youth and undermining our societies. It has become the responsibility — indeed, the duty — of every State to act purposefully to deal with this scourge.

Conscious of this responsibility, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, since its assumption of office in 1995, has embarked on an aggressive and comprehensive plan of action aimed at curbing the illicit drug trade and regaining control of our borders, our territorial waters, our streets and those of our institutions which might hitherto have been easy targets of the drug lords. In effect, we are fighting a battle to protect our "sovereignty" from takeover by drug barons.

At the national level, my Government has established an agency to coordinate the overall efforts against drug-trafficking. An overall master plan has been drafted and is currently the subject of public consultations. We have put in place a strong legal framework to enable prosecutions and investigations. Appropriate legislation to facilitate judicial cooperation with other countries and participation in regional and multilateral institutions has also been enacted. In addition, legislation currently before Parliament will significantly improve the provisions against money-laundering.

My country has also worked aggressively on the regional front, to foster cooperation to combat the growth of transnational crimes associated with drug-trafficking. In this regard, we have endorsed the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action as an instrument for effective drug control cooperation in the region, and we recently accepted further commitments arising from the Caribbean/United States summit of May 1997.

Trinidad and Tobago, as part of its regional commitment to the fight against money-laundering, is host to the secretariat of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago, with the cooperation of other Caribbean Community Governments, Canada, Britain and the United States, has created a witness protection programme. We have also decided to establish a criminal justice protection programme to facilitate cooperation in the confidential and secure protection of witnesses, jurors, judicial and law enforcement personnel and their families.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to international cooperation in the fight against drug-trafficking is perhaps best exemplified by the cooperative relationship with the Government of the United States of America. An extradition treaty and a maritime cooperation agreement have been signed between our two countries.

The Government of the United States has also been providing technical and other forms of assistance to Trinidad and Tobago in the following areas: strengthening of our counter-drug-crime task force so as to enable greater success in prosecutions; provision of country-wide radar and other equipment to enable more effective overall command and control of maritime and aerial counter-drug operations; the provision of vessels to strengthen the capability of our Coast Guard and the Customs Marine Interdiction Unit; and the establishment in Trinidad and Tobago of a United States Drug Enforcement Agency office to facilitate cooperation between the two countries and other jurisdictions in the region.

My Government has also concluded bilateral treaties with the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom, and we have also intensified cooperation with Venezuela with the establishment of a mixed commission on drugs.

Our initiatives have met with measurable success. The Government has successfully prosecuted and extradited major drug traffickers and secured court orders for the confiscation of ill-gotten assets from the drug trade. With the assistance of the European Union and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, we have also introduced meaningful drug prevention programmes tailored to the specific needs of our communities. In an ongoing action plan which brings together all of the military and law enforcement agencies in strategic action, we have already made a significant impact in the suppression and reduction of drug-related crime.

Such national efforts of Governments must be facilitated by an intensified, reformulated and supportive international drug agency. Such a strategy must incorporate a more balanced approach, with a heightened emphasis on demand reduction. The global strategy must also provide sustainable alternatives to drug-trafficking as a form of employment and create options for persons who are vulnerable to the abuse of mind-altering substances.

Trinidad and Tobago therefore welcomes the Political Declaration to be adopted by this Assembly, which sets out an all-embracing global strategy and puts forward a number of bold objectives and target dates for their achievement.

I believe that with this sustained and realistic practical action, and with the adequate allocation of resources, we can achieve real and measurable results.

We must not and cannot fail, for the future of our youth is at stake. This forum is unlikely to engage in any deliberation that will be of greater urgency to all of mankind.

The United Nations has achieved singular success in maintaining peace among the peoples of the globe. Now, this ultimate forum of the family of nations is assembled to formulate strategies that we pray will recapture from the evil empire ruled by drug dealers those communities of the world which they already have in their clutches.

But our greatest obligation must surely be to our young people; to save the young people of planet earth from ever falling victim to those greedy demons who continue their destructive trade against all nations represented here.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Abderrahman El Youssoufi, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. El Youssoufi (Morocco) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco to express our sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Nigeria following the death of General Sani Abacha. May God welcome him in His heaven.

It gives me great pleasure to express to you, Mr. President, my deep gratitude for the laudable efforts you have made to prepare for this extraordinary session of the General Assembly. We would like to express our trust in your great experience, which will serve as the best guarantee to ensure the success of this session, upon which all the peoples of the world pin great hopes.

I would also like to express my feelings of esteem and gratitude to the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Mr. Pino Arlacchi, for the constructive and tireless efforts he has deployed since he took his post.

The drug problem and the rampant use of drugs has taken on worrisome proportions in recent decades, causing harm to humankind as serious as that inflicted by political conflicts and economic and social scourges.

The multidimensional scourge of drugs has become a threat to all social sectors and to all societies, be they developed or not. It poses a direct threat to the security of peoples and is a major cause of the deterioration and degradation of society. The drug problem has expanded its geographic scope and multiplied its financial gains to the extent that the drug trade now ranks second in international trade, after the arms trade.

Likewise, the development of modern communications systems has contributed to helping this trade to adapt very well and even better exploit the current world economic situation.

The increase in synthetic drugs and laboratory-produced psychotropic substances, which are more difficult to control than cultivated drugs, poses a serious threat to the efforts of the international community in the area of international drug control.

In order to take up the multidimensional challenges posed by the drug problem, the international community must reconsider its working methods, which requires a rational and comprehensive plan, backed by genuine political will and based on the principle of shared responsibility among all countries. The seriousness of the present situation requires that all countries of the world stand united to face up to the scourge of drugs rather than engaging in an open confrontation between producing and consuming countries.

On this basis, we reaffirm that the quest for radical solutions to the scourge of drugs requires action based on the principle of shared solidarity among States at the bilateral level as well as within multilateral bodies, and

particularly within the framework of the United Nations. Such solidarity should be reflected in genuine and effective international cooperation, which will guarantee appropriate assistance and support to countries whose national economies are drained by their efforts to combat the drug problem.

We firmly believe that the situation requires more than ever that the drug problem be tackled globally, taking into account the question of economic and social development in its interdependent dimension, through enhanced international cooperation as an essential tool in order to successfully carry out effective action.

Thus, international cooperation efforts must essentially be geared to providing those countries that have shown a firm will and an unfailing determination in their anti-drug struggle the means to enable them to carry on their efforts to eradicate drug cultivation, to achieve lasting development and to combat drug-trafficking in all its forms. These various activities must be conducted with full respect for the sovereignty of States while refraining from any interference in their internal affairs, in keeping with the recommendations of the General Assembly.

Morocco, which is concerned with honouring its international commitments as stipulated in the drugs-related international Conventions it has adopted, such as the 1961, 1971 and 1988 Conventions, has for the past few years pursued a clear-cut and responsible policy in its efforts to combat drugs. That policy has three main components: efforts to combat drug-trafficking, the implementation of a sustained development programme, and the consolidation of international cooperation efforts with a variety of partners.

Regarding the struggle against drug-trafficking, Morocco, which has set up a national drug control unit, has waged several campaigns in this area. I should like particularly to mention the campaign staged in 1995 that resulted in the dismantling of several traffickers' networks that included Moroccan traffickers and dealers of various other nationalities. The campaign has yielded very positive results and was favourably received on the international scene.

Convinced of the need to eradicate this scourge at the root, Morocco is making consistent efforts to achieve sustainable development in the affected areas through the implementation of an integrated economic and social development programme that takes the form of alternative projects.

To this end, in 1995 Morocco set up an agency for the social and economic development of the northern provinces, which was provided with important financial resources from the State budget. In the same vein, Morocco has endeavoured to enlarge the scope of its cooperation with various partners — especially with the countries of the western Mediterranean and other European countries — in an effort to combat drug-trafficking, as concerns participation in the financing of certain development projects.

Despite the fact that Morocco is not at present a transit point, a serious event occurred in July 1997, that might have led to a serious tragedy had it not been for the determination and vigilance of the national agencies in charge of drug control, which seized 6 tons of cocaine that had washed up on the Atlantic coast of Morocco while being shipped to Europe. The Moroccan authorities incinerated the seized substance on 25 February 1998 in the presence of the regional representative of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and of experts from several European and American countries.

This event is clear-cut evidence that any country, no matter how far it may be from the drug production and consumption areas, can be exposed to this kind of catastrophe. This leaves no doubt as to the imperative need to enhance international cooperation in its many dimensions in order to deal with the drug problem.

The efforts of the drug-producing countries cannot yield the expected results so long as the consuming countries do not pledge themselves to implement an effective policy to cut demand.

In this respect, we can only express our concern over the new methods that some countries are beginning to adopt to deal with the drug plague by legalizing the culture and personal use of so-called "soft" drugs. The anti-drug struggle, waged at any intensity, cannot achieve the hoped-for results if it is not accompanied by parallel efforts on the part of consuming States to eradicate the root of this plague by eliminating the demand for these deadly products.

The international public is closely following the proceedings of this session and is pinning great hopes on the positive results and constructive decisions that will crown our work and spare humankind from a devastating plague. Our responsibility is therefore historic and requires us to translate our good intentions and political will into concrete and effective measures, in the

framework of global and comprehensive international cooperation, so that together we may look forward, with greater confidence and hope, to a better future for all mankind.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Vartan Oskanian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Oskanian (Armenia): In 1990, the General Assembly was alarmed by the dramatic increase in drug abuse and the illicit production and trafficking of narcotic drugs. It recognized the threat this posed to the health and well-being of millions of people in a majority of countries in the world. Nearly a decade later, neither the problem nor the threat has disappeared. Instead, every nation faces the reality of this ever-growing menace.

Our region of the world is no different. In fact, living as we do in societies in transition, we are confronted daily by the realization that the new-found social freedoms of an open society, mixed with the uncertainties of an unstable, developing economy, leave many in our countries vulnerable to the temptations of drugs — not just for personal use, but also for quick and easy financial gain.

Armenia is a Party to the three major United Nations drug control Conventions: the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. With these Conventions in mind, Armenia is working to broaden and strengthen its legal framework in order to fight narcotic-drug addiction and illicit drug-trafficking. Based on the requirements of the three United Nations Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988, eight new articles have been incorporated into the text of Armenia's soon-to-be-adopted criminal code.

In accordance with the provisions of those Conventions, control over the regulation of illicit production, sale, demand, traffic, import, export, distribution and utilization of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has been tightened in Armenia's health-care institutions, its chemical industry and its scientific research centres. However, severely weakened institutional accountability, as well as a still underdeveloped system for the formulation and dissemination of rules and regulations, hamper the control and oversight process.

The analysis of crime in Armenia during the last five years shows an increase in narcotics-related criminal activity. Compared to 1993, such crimes have increased one and a half times and the amount of narcotic drugs seized has increased thirtyfold. At the same time, as a result of evidence apprehended, it is clear that 70 per cent of the narcotics confiscated in Armenia originate outside our country. Tragically, Armenia has become a transit route for illicit drug-trafficking. Armenia lacks the necessary technical facilities to fully counter this traffic.

Indeed, it is not surprising, then, that Armenia believes that only through international cooperation do today's societies stand a chance in fighting the spread of drugs. This is why our work here is so important. The adoption of the documents under consideration at this special session can only have a positive impact on our fight, especially in the areas of money-laundering, judicial cooperation and the control of chemical substances and stimulants.

Armenia is currently in the process of formulating a comprehensive national drug-control strategy. We do this keeping in mind the global drug strategy being advanced by the work of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. We are particularly focused on programmes aimed at reducing drug use among youth and high-risk segments of the population.

In this regard, in addition to the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction at hand today, we deem very useful the incorporation of the targets stated in the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control, adopted in Vienna in 1987 and restated later, at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly in 1990, in our drug policy. Here indeed, families, society as a whole, non-governmental organizations and mass media, and regional and international organizations have an important role to play. Education will play a key role in our efforts to combat increasing drug demand.

As is true for all countries with economies in transition, Armenia has suffered a sharp decline in living conditions. The motivation to earn quick income is very strong and is exacerbated by a scarcity of jobs and low salaries. Furthermore, Armenia's economic system currently lacks many of the risk-spreading mechanisms, such as insurance, developed labour markets and a stable

social security fund. The Armenian Government recognizes that these circumstances make our official structures vulnerable to corruption and increase the potential danger for money-laundering and drug-trafficking.

These conditions also make it difficult for Armenia and other countries in transition to allocate the necessary financial and material resources to this struggle. Still, taking into consideration the dangerous trends of drug addiction and the requirements of the United Nations Conventions, the Government of Armenia is elaborating new approaches and policies in the fight against narcotic drugs. A special unit to fight illegal narcotic drug-trafficking, established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Security, will coordinate work being done in Armenia.

Moreover, an electronic database on different directions of narcotrafficking has been created. This will aid in confronting illegal drug-trafficking in the region and elsewhere. It will also help coordinate the activities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other units in their fight against the illicit drug trade and in their need for an exchange of information, and provide for an objective basis for cooperation. The database will be connected to similar interregional networks, a subject which has been much discussed at various Commonwealth of Independent States and Black Sea Economic Cooperation meetings.

The Government of Armenia highly commends the efforts of the Secretary-General to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to address drug control and transnational crime. Unfortunately, crime, especially this particular one, is no different from other social and economic trends, in that it knows no State boundaries and recognizes no cultural or societal bans. Only through the combined efforts of individual countries and the full utilization of appropriate multilateral institutions, including the United Nations system, can we achieve control over drug abuse and drug-trafficking.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kamal Kharrazi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran) (*spoke in Persian English text furnished by delegation*) I have the pleasure, once again, to extend to you, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the special session of the General Assembly. I also convey my warm felicitations to all members of the Bureau and the Secretariat.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and highly commend the reform carried out by Mr. Arlacchi, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, in establishing the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. We hope that under his strong leadership and expertise a close synergy will materialize between the activities of the two pillars of that Office — the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

The international community has recognized that this increasingly dangerous phenomenon has become a threat to sustainable development and to the political and economic stability of countries. The expansion and diversification of illicit drugs — a powerful $400 billion per year industry with a global network of crime and political connections — is a major source of instability and underdevelopment in many parts of the world.

To seize the momentum created by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to this global problem, we should strengthen regional and international cooperation in targeting major drug traffickers by eradicating illicit drug cultivation; promoting alternative development; combating money-laundering; reducing the illicit demand for drugs; controlling precursors, chemicals and amphetamine-type stimulants; and promoting judicial cooperation on drug control.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, due to its geographical position between drug producers on its eastern borders and drug consumers in the West — mostly in Europe — is seriously suffering from the spill-over of transit traffic. Drug traffickers are using Iran's territory as the shortest and major land route for the transit of narcotics from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Europe. My Government is spending $400 million annually at the national level to control drug transit and trafficking into and through Iran. In addition, another $400 million is spent annually on demand-reduction programmes, including treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of addicts. All these measures have been unilaterally carried out without receiving any

contributions from international organizations or donor countries.

Today, the campaign against drug problems and initiatives for restraining measures to block drug transit have turned into a full-scale war. We are involved in military operations on our eastern border to annihilate caravans and smuggling bandits who are equipped with the latest military equipment, such as anti-aircraft missiles. Every year, quite substantial amounts of narcotics are seized and a large number of illicit traffickers are stopped from smuggling narcotics across the country.

In the past 19 years, since the victory of the Islamic revolution, the total amount of confiscated drugs — including heroin, morphine, opium and hashish — has been more than 1,260 tons. In 1997 alone, more than 194 tons of various drugs, equivalent to more than 37 tons of heroin and more than 11 tons of hashish, were confiscated. Of course, in these daily battles many of our law enforcement personnel have been martyred, 2,356 of them in the past 18 years. It was just a few months ago that the commander of law enforcement of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, was martyred in the battle against drug traffickers.

The human and financial resources spent for the fortification of the eastern border, without any economic or commercial significance, has so far cost the Government around $561 million. Furthermore, although the harsh anti-drug measures taken by the Government have been, to a great extent, in the interest of the consumer countries — mostly in Europe — unfortunately, some of those countries seem not to be enthusiastic in meeting their responsibilities in this regard. On the contrary, they criticize my country for its strict stand towards illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs.

One of our regional concerns, which we believe is of the utmost importance to all States in our region and to the international community, is the critical issue of illicit cultivation of poppies and drug production in Afghanistan. Disastrous events in the civil war have turned Afghanistan into a poverty-stricken and war-ravaged country which produces huge amounts of drugs. My delegation is of the opinion that the international community should try to put an end to the current bloodshed in Afghanistan and that it should try to seek political stability, national consensus and commitments there to bring the alarming drug issue under control. In this connection, we welcome the UNDCP programme in Afghanistan to assist in crop substitution and alternative development programmes through cooperation with all parties in that country.

We encourage the UNDCP to continue its efforts to control and curb illicit supplies through regional cooperation. We are pleased that UNDCP has signed an agreement to establish in Tehran a central coordination unit within the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). We believe that ECO can play an important role in stimulating action against illicit drug-trafficking in the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms the vital role of the International Narcotics Control Board as the treaty body of international drug control conventions, and commends it for its remarkable work during 1997.

At the same time, I would like to stress here that unilateral mechanisms for the evaluation of progress made by an individual country in the fight against illicit drugs are not only inappropriate and undesirable, but also counter-productive and harmful to the efforts against drug-trafficking. My delegation believes that such qualifications and certifications are inconsistent with the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in the internal affairs of others and undermine multilateral instruments and mechanisms established for this purpose. Therefore, such policies must be rejected by the entire international community.

During the recent visit of Mr. Arlacchi to my country, activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the struggle against illicit drug-trafficking were thoroughly demonstrated. We are most confident that his efforts will culminate in greater cooperation between my country and the UNDCP. The country's highest-level officials have reiterated and assured the Executive Director of our determination to fight drug-trafficking.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my Government's determination to continue our fight against illicit drug-trafficking. But it is evident that this is not a fight that any country can win on its own. International cooperation is a key requisite for any successful plan of action.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jozef Kalman, Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia.

Mr. Kalman (Slovakia) (*spoke in Slovak; English text furnished by the delegation*): The decision to convene this special session of the General Assembly devoted to combating drug abuse was greeted by the Slovak Republic with pleasure and particular attention, because the drug phenomenon in our country has shown itself very capable of using and adapting to the changing economic and political conditions and new technologies and information flows.

The abuse, illegal production and trafficking of drugs have become some of the most negative phenomena in our society today. The global character of this issue has a deep impact upon the moral foundations of human society, influencing countries' economies and legal systems. Drug addiction cannot be considered as a specific, isolated phenomenon; it is a part of many other general phenomena characteristic of contemporary society. The drug scene is developing very quickly, as is evidenced by the almost limitless variety of abused substances and ways to use them, as well as by the ever decreasing age level of users, with all the social, health-care and economic consequences that go with it.

The Slovak Republic supports the activities developed by international United Nations structures to deal with drug-related issues, especially those that address criminality and the penal law.

As compared with other countries, our country has known the problems accompanying drug consumption for only a relatively short time. The current drug scene, however, is characterized by rapid growth. We have noticed an increasing number of consumers coming from lower and lower age groups, and the total number of drug addicts is increasing. Although our situation is not identical to that in Western European countries, we must, unfortunately, expect developments in this area to accelerate in our country in the future.

As early as August 1995, the Government of the Slovak Republic reacted to this serious situation by introducing the National Programme to Combat Drugs, a fundamental programme aimed at eliminating drug-trafficking and solving a variety of related issues throughout our society. This was an open, strategic document that announced national efforts to adopt and implement measures to suppress the illegal production of and traffic in drugs and to decrease the illicit supply of drugs within our territory. It also defines the main objectives for health and social care for those who have not been able to resist this phenomenon.

The tasks of the National Programme are assessed annually and revised by the Committee of Ministers for Drug Addiction and Drug Control, which is a coordinating, advisory, initiative and control body of the Government of the Slovak Republic, and its reports are considered by the Government and by Parliament.

Today, we can say that in the area of prevention — which is the most effective means of preventing an increase in drug addiction — we are successfully implementing anti-drug education in the school curriculum at the primary and secondary levels. Specialized university studies are being formulated, in particular with regard to teacher training. Education for a healthy way of life is included in the programme of extra-curricular activities for children and young people, and a network of specialized preventive centres is being developed by the State and by non-governmental institutions. Plans for a variety of measures are being supported, especially in the health-care and social areas, to provide assistance for drug-addicted citizens and groups at risk, as well as for the reintegration into society of people who have been treated.

Aware of the importance of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the Slovak Republic has been actively involved in its activities by, *inter alia*, signing and meeting the objectives of the memorandum of understanding of the V4 countries, Slovenia and UNDCP in 1995. We have a pre-eminent interest in developing future multilateral cooperation in partnership with other Member States, focusing on needs in the Central and Eastern European region, as we demonstrated in 1996 by organizing the Bratislava conference of Ministers responsible for combating drugs in these countries.

Given the seriousness of the drug issue at the global and regional levels at this historic moment, allow me to call upon our neighbouring States to cooperate on a regular basis at the ministerial level and to hold periodic meetings aimed at suppressing the drug phenomenon, emphasizing prevention in particular. The Slovak Republic offers all of its experience to the international community and UNDCP, together with all of its professional, intellectual and other expertise so that these activities can be improved and extended at a global level and in all regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

We welcome the documents prepared for debate at the special session of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to assure the Assembly that in the future the Slovak Republic will take an active part in fulfilling the commitments undertaken and will implement them in its national legislation and National Programme to Combat Drugs so as to enable people to live better, drug-free lives, not only in our country but all over the world. We are, and will remain, open to all international initiatives aimed at the effective elimination and solution of the increasingly dangerous problem that drugs pose for mankind.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rafiqul Islam, Minister for Home Affairs of Bangladesh.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): I convey to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation as well as on my own behalf, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency at this special session. Your opening statement, and that of the Secretary-General, addressed the key concerns of the present day in respect of the world's drug problem, which poses the single greatest threat to the welfare of future generations.

The drug threat has reached an alarming level, and it is affecting both developed and developing countries. What alarms us is that illicit production of and trafficking in drugs continue to thrive in the face of strong international resolve and programmes of action against them. Despite the relentless fight against drugs by individual Governments, the United Nations and civil society at large, the problem seems to have barely been contained.

Is it that the traffickers are so powerful as to be able to disregard the authority of national Governments and that they have the arrogance to test the will of the international community? Or is it that our combat strategies are flawed? These are issues which the Assembly must address at this session very seriously and with sincere commitment.

Bangladesh takes the issue of drug abuse and illicit trafficking as a matter of serious concern. In close and active cooperation with the United Nations drug-control system we have been fulfilling at the national level the obligations of the international instruments relating to drugs, with a view to developing national and regional strategies to eradicate or significantly reduce the cultivation of illicit crops. We in Bangladesh totally banned the import, sale and consumption of opium; this was followed by a total ban on the cultivation, distribution, sale and consumption of cannabis in our country. These steps were taken in pursuance of the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961.

I wish now to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the specific drug problems that confront Bangladesh. Bangladesh is situated between the Golden Triangle to the east and the Golden Crescent to the west — the two large illicit opium producing areas of the world — and its geographical position makes it particularly vulnerable as a transit country. While amphetamine-type stimulants are the major drugs of abuse in a good number of developed and developing countries, the drug scenario in Bangladesh, to the contrary, has a different focus: on the depressant type of drugs, such as codeine phosphate, heroin, pethidine and buprenorphine injections. Abuse of these depressant drugs by overdose causes great harm to the human body, directly affecting many vital organs.

We welcome the draft action plan which is being considered at this special session to address the problem of illicit crop production. Because of our geographical location and our soil conditions, we keep a very close watch on this matter, and various agencies in our country remain on alert to ensure that no production of narcotic crops can take place on our soil.

To contain the supply end, the Bangladesh Government enacted the Narcotics Control Act, 1990, with stringent penal measures including a maximum punishment of death for possession of quantities of heroine or cocaine exceeding 25 grams. We will not compromise, or show leniency to those who profit from human misery and gamble with human lives. With a view to further updating our existing laws in line with the provisions of the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, a draft amendment to the existing law is under active consideration by our Government. The proposed amendment provides for the extradition of drug offenders, control of delivery techniques, and the freezing of bank accounts of drug offenders.

Supply thrives when demand is there. Basic economics surely applies here. Significant progress in drug control therefore, calls for a approach balanced between supply reduction and demand reduction. The illicit trade in drugs will die a natural death when we can ensure that there is no market for them. Here, we must mount a multi-pronged offensive directed against the production, distribution and consumption of illegal drugs

and psychotropic substances. We must also remain vigilant against the links existing between drug-trafficking and transnational organized crime. All of this calls for the pooling of resources and the sharing of information, technology and expertise if our global offensive to really succeed.

Alongside measures to reduce the supply of drugs, we have also undertaken programmes for the reduction of demand for drugs. A national drug demand reduction strategy has been formulated on the basis of recommendations that came out of a series of workshops organized with the assistance of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in various parts of the country, whose participants were drawn from all strata of society.

On the rehabilitation side, within our very limited means, we have set up a few public-sector treatment centres for drug addicts — which again are not adequate to cater for the treatment needs of the victims. As part of our national awareness programme, massive awareness build-up campaigns and motivational activities have also been launched through the print and electronic media.

Our presence at this special session testifies to our common resolve to combat drug abuse. The statements of other representatives, espousing stronger integration in the international drive against drug-trafficking and support for national programmes, reassure us that we are together in this common fight. Our success, however, will depend on the strength of our partnership and the commitment that we undertake to an integrated approach.

We hope that our deliberations at this special session will provide further impetus to our common resolve and help achieve the adoption of an action-oriented programme that will give vigour to ongoing efforts. Our targets — to reduce demand and to destroy production and distribution mechanisms — must remain high on the agenda of action.

If we want to save our children and future generations, we must work in a united way. Then and only then can we be sure that the steps taken at this special session will culminate in the successful eradication of the scourge of drugs from the face of our planet.

The President: I thank the Minister for Home Affairs of Bangladesh for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joshua Matza, Minister of Health of Israel.

Mr. Matza (Israel): The State of Israel takes this opportunity to thank the United Nations and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for giving the issue of the global fight against drug abuse priority on the international agenda.

This Hall has been the scene of important and crucial debates. This Hall has known many dramas, but most of them have dealt with political and security issues. Today we are discussing a major social problem which merits special attention, and for that I wish to express my appreciation to the initiators of this session.

The issue is a social one, but this does not detract from its significance as compared with political and security matters. The issue we are discussing today is a matter of life and death. Today, drugs are a plague, striking countries all over the world. It does not discriminate between whether they are developed or weak, whether their population is black or white, whether they are eastern or western. This plague hits young and old, women and men equally.

This plague has no limits, nor is the contact with it restricted. Today, my colleagues, we do not represent States, today we stand together and display a cooperative spirit — as one man with one goal — to uproot the plague of drugs.

Ten years ago we started a multifaceted approach towards combating drug abuse in Israel. To address the problem, as a first step we established a national authority that functions as a central body. Its operation is based on a set policy: development of services, supply of facilities and operating regulations.

All our respective ministries share the heavy burden of this fight. In a 10-year period we developed from scratch a unique system comprising various services, with innovative approaches. The work is done at schools, in the community, in treatment and rehabilitation facilities, in prisons and among disassociated youth almost everywhere. The activities are performed jointly by the ministries of police, health, labour and social affairs and education, reinforced by the anti-drug authority.

Israel shares the international concern with regard to the threat of illicit drugs and the common conviction that this phenomenon has to be uprooted. We are party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and to the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

Israeli law deals with crimes whose impact surpasses national boundaries, has worldwide implications and demands international solutions. We have to consider the possibility of supporting extraterritorial courts outside the sphere of national jurisdiction.

Israel cooperates with many nations by supplying legal assistance. Our national police maintain fruitful collaboration with police forces all around the world, especially in connection with complicated drug offences.

The importance of cooperation at the subregional and regional levels in the fight against illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is apparent. For this reason, I would like to refer to the recent joint declaration issued by the six signatory countries of the 1995 memorandum of understanding on drug control — namely, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam — which demonstrates the benefits of such cooperation.

During the past years we have made progress concerning long-term measures, such as treatment, rehabilitation and education, designed to halt the demand for narcotics and other illegal drugs. Educational programmes are conducted in 60 per cent of our schools, and, by the year 2000, with the adoption of innovative principles, we shall reach out to all our schools. The treatment and rehabilitation infrastructure has been improved. Research on drug abuse is encouraged. This past year we crystallized a new master plan of intervention with regard to children and youth at high risk. Implementation of this master plan involves a major change in our national policy.

The public plays a major role in the collaborative efforts to combat this plague. Without the support of the public for legislation and enforcement, we cannot expect success.

The State of Israel is ready to share its experience in every area of the fight against drug abuse. In past years we have signed several bilateral agreements on cooperation on this issue. We have also shared our expertise with some emerging democracies and developing countries. We can offer assistance in the field of preventing drug abuse among youth at high risk and directing them to the right path. We have special rehabilitation programmes for prisoners and ex-convicts. Our objective is to provide easy access to social services for those in distress, without prejudice or bias.

Along with many of my colleagues, I too hold the opinion that drugs know no borders. For the sake of amassing riches, the world of crime knows no limits — neither physical nor of wickedness. The enormous technological progress of the past decade has not only brought great economic benefits but has also, ironically, made it far easier to commit transnational crimes.

The countries of the world, and particularly those democracies with economic influence, have to set a limit, to stop the plague of drugs, to fight it to the end. Not only biological and non-conventional weapons pose a threat to the peace in the world and to its inhabitants; the drug market represents no less a danger and leaves behind dead and poisoned people day after day.

Only through international cooperation with shared activities can we stop the spread of the drug scourge. We hope that regional peace and cooperation will grow and prosper. It is vital that we create effective international cooperation that can help us prevent, or at least reduce, the crimes that know no national borders.

The President: I thank the Minister of Health of Israel for his statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Mervat Tallawi, Minister of Social Affairs of Egypt. Please note that she is the first lady to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. Tallawi (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Egyptian delegation welcomes the spirit of understanding and consensus prevailing among the delegations attending this special session and their determination to combat the problem of drugs. This is emphasized in the documents to be adopted by this session. In this context, we would like to thank the Secretary-General as well as the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for the efforts made to prepare for this session.

I am happy to express Egypt's support for the documents of this session, as they reflect Egypt's vision of the threats of drugs and as they accord with the practical steps taken by Egypt in its practical policy for a war against drugs. Since Egypt supports in particular the efforts to promote international cooperation to confront the drug problem, we hope that such measures and this special session will prove a decisive turning

point in the international efforts against drugs. This will not be so unless a new and practical stand is taken by the international community whereby all States, both developed and developing, assume a shared responsibility based on the following principles:

First, the requirements for fighting a real and effective war against drugs have now greatly exceeded the capability and means of most developing States, particularly when such States are called upon to restructure their economies, achieve sustainable development, combat poverty, eradicate illiteracy and achieve social justice in the context of globalization. Furthermore, the plans adopted by developing countries for economic and human development face a real threat from the spread of drugs, which eat away at their resources and debilitate their human capacities.

Secondly, the social and health dimension of the drug problem has not yet received the attention and care it needs. While attention has been focused on interdiction and prevention aspects of the problem — that is to say, the material side of the problem, which might be called the hardware side — the social aspects, or the software side of the problem, have not received the required level of attention. For example, anti-smoking campaigns have drawn much more interest and achieved much more success than anti-addiction campaigns.

Thirdly, the effects of the danger that threatens the economies of developing countries and their developmental plans as a result of the drug problem extend to developed countries in the present circumstances of global economy.

Fourthly, the threat of drugs is a threat against all States. Therefore, we must not concentrate on one region rather than another or on one kind of drug rather than another. In the Middle East, we are particularly concerned about cannabis cultivation and we hope that it will receive the same degree of attention as other illicit drug crops.

Fifthly, developed countries are the biggest consumers of drugs. This favours an increase in demand, which, in turn, raises production. Furthermore, we must take into consideration the copycat trend among youth in various parts of the world.

Egypt's efforts to combat drugs are clearly laid out in the national report that has been distributed today.

I would like to mention at this point that Egypt began its war against drugs in the nineteenth century. More than 70 years ago, Egypt was the first country in the world to create a security organ fully devoted to combating drugs. Egypt has intertwined its international commitments and national legislation in a major amendment of drug laws undertaken in 1989, following the adoption of the Vienna Convention. Egypt has entered into more than 30 bilateral juridical instruments. We have fought our drug war on the fronts of education, health, social affairs and the media. Nevertheless, however great these efforts are, they will not bear fruit in the absence of effective international cooperation among all parties.

In order to develop and empower this international cooperation, Egypt believes that a number of steps must be taken. Among the most important steps, we must, first, promote international cooperation in strengthening the economic and social development plans of developing countries, particularly with regard to rural development, because this is a major means of combating drug cultivation and finding alternative development projects.

Second, we must strengthen the role of the United Nations and its regional offices and increase resources and financial allocations needed by them in line with their increased responsibilities.

Third, the international community must promote the efforts of transit States as they confront international drug-trafficking.

Fourth, we must promote national efforts in caring for addicts and their families by providing the most modern means of treatment, rehabilitation and training.

Fifth, we must support and invest in the efforts of non-governmental organizations to combat addiction.

Sixth, we must strengthen all forms of international cooperation in the juridical and security fields in order to extradite criminals and ensure mutual juridical assistance as well as information-sharing among States.

Seventh, we must strengthen international cooperation in facing the problem of money-laundering resulting from the drug trade.

Let us resolve to leave this session and enter the field of action so that we can review and assess our actions annually in the General Assembly and enter a new century free of drugs with hope for a better future for our future generations.

The President: I thank the Minister for Social Affairs of Egypt for her statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tin Hlaing, Minister for Home Affairs, Chairman of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control of Myanmar.

Mr. Hlaing (Myanmar): Mr. President, at the outset, let me express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you presiding over this special session of the General Assembly. We are firmly convinced that your proven diplomatic skills and rich experience will guide our deliberations to a successful outcome.

The efforts of the international community, through domestic and international strategies, to combat the scourge of narcotic drugs over the past several decades have led only to mixed results. As clearly indicated in the report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1997, despite some achievements, shortcomings still exist in drug control at both the national and international levels. Disturbingly, the menace of narcotic drugs continues to pose a serious threat to both developed and developing countries.

Against the backdrop of these unsettling trends, it is timely for the international community to meet in this historic session to elevate our common endeavour to a new stage.

The commitment of the international community to eradicate illicit narcotic crops, enshrined in the international drug control treaties and reaffirmed in relevant General Assembly resolutions, is steadfast and unquestionable. Despite this commitment, the results we have achieved are not encouraging. This demonstrates that commitment alone, however strong it may be, is not adequate to achieve desired results.

As a country with full commitment, Myanmar attaches great importance to the availability of sufficient funds on a sustained and predictable basis for alternative development projects in areas producing illicit narcotic crops. We strongly feel that, based on the principle of shared responsibility, it is the moral imperative of the donor community to play the role of staunch supporter of the efforts against illicit narcotic crops. A new global plan for the elimination of illicit narcotic crops proposed by the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) is timely. We welcome the proposal and share the optimism expressed by the Executive Director on the successful implementation of the plan.

Efforts to eradicate illicit narcotic drugs will be seriously undermined unless equally vigorous attempts are made in the area of demand reduction. It is therefore extremely important to substantially reduce the demand for illicit drugs if all the gains which we have achieved on the supply side of the equation are not to be negated.

The importance of demand reduction has been long recognized in all the drug control treaties and by the international conferences related to drug control. The draft declaration on the guiding principles of drug demand reduction, to be adopted at this session, is a most necessary and dynamic step which will pave the way for identifying further measures to be taken for the reduction of the demand for illicit drugs.

Myanmar fully recognizes the importance of cooperative measures at the subregional, regional and international levels in combating the illicit production of, demand for and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. This is reflected in its active cooperation in drug-control activities with the People's Republic of China and Thailand. Furthermore, Myanmar signed bilateral agreements with India, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, the Russian Federation, Laos and the Philippines to control drug-trafficking and abuse. Very recently, thanks to the sponsorship of the Japanese Government, an international seminar on alternative development was conducted in Yangon with a view to exchange experiences on crop substitution and integrated development. Myanmar is determined to sustain and step up this cooperation.

The sincere efforts of the Government of Myanmar have resulted in remarkable achievements in its anti-narcotics endeavours. In April 1997, the Mongla region in the eastern Shan State, an area right in the middle of the poppy-growing region, was declared an opium-free zone. As a further step, projects have been initiated for the Kokang and Wa regions in the northern Shan State, with the year 2000 and 2005 set, respectively, as the target dates for the establishment of additional opium-free zones.

At present, a nationwide campaign for the collection of accurate baseline data on narcotics is under way with the active participation of Government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the local communities concerned. These data will serve as a basis for further stepping up the efforts against the evil of narcotic drugs and will be valuable input for future drug-related projects.

The Government of Myanmar is fully committed to combating the scourge of narcotic drugs. This commitment has been proved beyond a doubt by its sacrifice of many lives in its war on drugs and the resources it has spent to uplift the economic and social standards of the population in the remote border areas where poppy is grown. During the period from September 1988 to April 1998, the Government was able to seize and destroy more than 3,880 kilos of heroin, over 24,800 kilos of opium, over 11 million tablets of stimulants, especially amphetamines, and burn down 87 heroin-refining camps. Seized narcotic drugs have been put to the torch in front of the public 12 times in Yangon and 19 times in the border areas. But this was not achieved without sacrifice. In these drug-suppression endeavours, 766 members of the Myanmar Armed Forces lost their lives and 2,292 members sustained severe injuries. During the same period, the Government has spent more than 9 billion kyats on the development of border areas where poppy is grown.

All the efforts of the Myanmar Government for the suppression of narcotic drugs as well as for development plans for poppy-growing areas are being carried out with our own limited resources. We are determined, however, to achieve the goal of the total elimination of poppy-growing and opium production in Myanmar within 15 years, using the resources available to us. Nevertheless, should there be assistance from the international community, this goal will be achieved sooner rather than later. Here we wish to emphasize and affirm that we will continue our unwavering efforts with the available resources till we achieve our avowed aim of becoming a country totally free of the evil of drugs.

The drug menace is a problem of global proportions requiring concerted and sustained global response. Although we have not won the war on illicit drugs, we have advanced in the right direction and are gaining momentum. Myanmar will resolutely undertake to bear its share of the global burden and solemnly pledges to continue its fullest cooperation with the international community.

The President: I thank the Minister for Home Affairs of Myanmar for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable David Simmons, Attorney General and Minister for Home Affairs of Barbados.

Mr. Simmons (Barbados): Ten years ago the international community adopted the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances — the 1988 Vienna Convention.

Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is appropriate that this special session should have been convened to consider enhanced action aimed at further tackling the serious global problem of illegal drugs. For, since 1988, notwithstanding the Vienna Convention, the world drug problem has not abated. It has become worse.

It now embraces new substances, including amphetamine-type stimulants and the diversion of precursors. The six themes of this session focus our attention on new and emerging trends while properly emphasizing increased action in the fields of drug demand reduction, money-laundering, the elimination of illicit crops and alternative development.

Barbados, like small States everywhere, is deeply concerned about the proliferation of the scourge of illegal drugs in the Caribbean region. Narcotrafficking increases crime, destroys the human persona, contaminates the business environment, undermines human rights, corrupts public officials, threatens democracy and destabilizes society as a whole.

Such challenges to the security of our States demand national, regional and international responses if legitimate society is not to be destroyed.

The Government of Barbados, which came to office in September 1994, has consistently articulated and implemented a five-pronged strategy in the fight against illegal narcotic drugs. The objectives of the strategy are to reduce both supply and demand.

Specifically, therefore, our national strategy endeavours to increase public awareness and public education through the development of integrated demand reduction programmes; to improve the detection capabilities of law enforcement agencies; to enhance information sharing and intelligence gathering through closer regional and international cooperation; to assist in the development of facilities for the rehabilitation of addicts; and to keep legislation under constant review. We believe that the strategy is working.

In furtherance of our obligations under the Vienna Convention, the Government of Barbados has pursued its commitments assiduously.

As early as 1990, new legislation was enacted to prevent and control drug abuse and to criminalize money-laundering and the proceeds of crime. A National Council on Substance Abuse has been established to promote demand reduction initiatives. Governmental support is being rendered to private sector initiatives aimed at rehabilitation. Increased regional and international cooperation has conduced greatly to more effective interdiction efforts.

In the meantime, we have sought to remove impediments to law enforcement cooperation through the enactment of mutual legal assistance legislation and the signing of extradition, mutual legal assistance and maritime cooperation treaties.

Geopolitically, Barbados's location within the eastern Caribbean, set between the drug-producing countries of South America and the drug-consuming countries of North America and Europe, has meant that we are vulnerable to the machinations of organized transnational crime. At the same time, our islands form the first line of defence against the traffic in illegal drugs destined for countries in the North. Thus, the security of the Caribbean must be the responsibility of the developed North as much as it is our own responsibility.

None of our small States is able, individually, to combat the world drug problem effectively. There is a strong commitment in the Caribbean region to continuing to combine its efforts and resources with others in a total, international cooperative fight against the menace of illegal drugs. In this regard, we wish to urge developed countries of the North to intensify their efforts to reduce the demand for drugs through a greater commitment of resources.

The fight against illegal drugs can be won only by total international cooperation on all fronts. It was in that context that the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Right Honourable Owen Arthur, in September 1995 sought the assistance of the then British Prime Minister in developing a regional strategy against narcotrafficking. The response of Britain and France was swift and decisive.

With the assistance of the European Union and the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), a Regional Plan of Action for Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation was formulated in May 1996. I had the honour to chair the Meeting that developed that Plan of Action. This Barbados Plan of Action, which we have heard about during this session, has received the highest commendation from the Executive Director of the UNDCP. Mr. Arlacchi has observed:

> "This Plan of Action, to my knowledge, is the first concrete drug effort anywhere in the world to propose a truly regional solution which is both balanced and integrated."

The process of implementation of the Plan of Action has begun and I am pleased to report that the European Union has earmarked ECU 20 million over five years to fuel the process of implementation.

More recently, in May 1997, Caribbean heads of Government and the President of the United States of America endorsed another and complementary Plan of Action embodying cooperation in the fight against drugs. That Plan, too, is being implemented. So it will be appreciated that we in the Caribbean are giving real effect to the mandate of the 1988 Convention in full recognition that action against the world phenomenon is a common and shared responsibility. If we accept that principle of mutuality of interests, then no single country, however great, should arrogate to itself the right to evaluate progress made by individual countries in the fight against illegal drugs. Any such responsibility should inhere in a world organization. We therefore call for the development of a multilateral mechanism to monitor the efforts of nations. What better body than the United Nations itself?

Let me say a word about money-laundering. Through the programmes of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, the region has made considerable progress in establishing structures and systems to counter money-laundering. Yet, notwithstanding our best efforts, it seems that the developed world has considered penalizing those of our countries which have diversified their economies to promote offshore financial services as legitimate international business.

Let me warn that pursuit of such thoughts will be not only regressive, but entirely counter-productive. The countries of the Caribbean which promote offshore international financial business all appreciate and understand that our jurisdictions must gain and maintain reputations as centres of clean business. We also understand that action taken against money-laundering will not deter legitimate investment and should not

impede the development of a financial services industry. The opening of markets and the liberalization of trade will bring new challenges. The appropriate response is not to outlaw offshore financial business, but rather to strengthen its regulation.

For all of us, the political will is strong to wage war against narcotrafficking and money-laundering. However, financial and technical resources are weak. The more affluent and powerful countries of the North — especially those whose major cities are centres for money-laundering — can usefully support the efforts of developing countries by the provision of financial, technical and technological assistance and of increased opportunities for the training of our people to cope with the problems spawned by narcotrafficking.

Even more importantly, there must be fundamental change in the lending policies of international financial institutions to concepts of justice, law and order, and development. These concepts, which are essential to good governance, are inextricably linked. Small States, like Barbados, whose economies are turned outwards to attract services and foreign investments, must ensure that their justice systems and security are contemporary. Put another way, our jurisdictions will not be attractive to foreigners if they are destabilized by the drug menace or rendered unsafe by crime and lawlessness.

Barbados therefore calls upon the international financial institutions to make loan funds available to small States in order that they may more effectively improve equipment, matériel and law enforcement infrastructure to resist the challenges of organized crime.

As we give birth to a new Political Declaration today, let the developed world renew its commitment to assisting the poor countries in protecting their societies from the polluting effects of drugs and money-laundering. This world phenomenon is being tackled on a wide front. I give the assurance that Barbados will continue to cooperate fully in regional and international efforts to remove this scourge from our society.

The Acting President: I thank the Attorney General and Minister for Home Affairs of Barbados for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Jerry Ekandjo, Minister for Home Affairs of Namibia.

Mr. Ekandjo (Namibia): It is out of great concern for the future that Namibia is participating in this very important forum, where the scourge of the illicit production of, sale of, demand for, traffic in and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities is at the centre of discussion. This scourge which has made and continues to make young children in the world at large vulnerable and easy targets, and it is a menace that makes a mockery of our painstaking efforts to enhance social and economic development in our countries. Our participation is therefore a reaffirmation of our commitment to fight against this menace which threatens life itself. We vow to cooperate at all levels in the fight against this growing and unwelcome trend.

In Namibia, drug abuse problems are basically confined to mandrax and cannabis. Nevertheless, Namibia has been identified as a new drug-trafficking route to different drug-consuming markets. What was once our concern has now become reality. Ample evidence exists that Namibia is now being used as a transit point for hard drugs such as cocaine.

The Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Namibian police enjoys considerable success, but it would be naive to pretend that the problem is totally under control. The fact that hundreds of culprits are successfully prosecuted each year for drug-related offences is a salutary reminder that the commission and detection of these offences arise because border controls are not effective due to inadequate resources. This very point illustrates the need for closer cooperation between drug law enforcement agencies, customs and excise tax services, as well as immigration personnel on both sides of borders.

Accordingly, the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Namibian police has expanded its operations, particularly with the cooperation of other international and regional law enforcement units such as Interpol, international customs units and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization. At the same time, and in direct collaboration with the National Forensic Science Institute of Namibia, as well as the judiciary, the Drug Law Enforcement Unit has harmonized activities with regard to arrest, seizure, analysis and jurisprudence. This is aimed at ensuring the successful outcome of all investigations done by the Namibian police.

These pioneering efforts are especially necessary in the light of the fact that Namibia, as a relatively new independent country, is attracting more illicit drug-

trafficking syndicates, basically as a conduit to more affluent markets. Furthermore, we are routinely undertaking pre-emptive actions in the form of workshops, lectures and other interactive sessions that are focusing on youth and aim to reduce demand. These sessions, especially those at schools, have become so popular that additional resources are required in order to maintain the worthwhile efforts of the Drug Law Enforcement Unit, the National Forensic Science Institute and relevant community-based organizations. Thus, these groups have now launched and hosted an ongoing series of television and radio programmes.

I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that our Forensic Science Institute is fully accredited to well-established institutions and participates in various international proficiency testing schemes, as well as external auditing programmes for developing skills in, for example, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the ISOS and other similar international institutions. In this regard, we call upon the international community to assist countries which do not have the capacity to do so to participate in such events.

The international dimension of drug-trafficking is unquestionable, but international cooperation in cross-border crime prevention must also become a reality. It is against this backdrop that Namibia is a signatory to the Southern African Development Community protocol on illicit drug-trafficking.

For example, in 1993, the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Namibian police seized 3,595 kilograms of cocaine that had been transported through Angola and then supposedly through Namibia en route to South Africa. This consignment was intercepted at Windhoek International Airport, and the suspects were subsequently arrested thanks to our closer cooperation with the South African police. In another example of close cooperation — between the German customs service in Frankfurt and the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Namibian police — in 1997 three controlled deliveries were made and 7,181 kilograms of cocaine were seized by the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Namibian police. This consignment was sent through post office boxes in Namibia and was destined for South Africa. These are disturbing examples of the international dimension of drug-trafficking and of what the crime syndicates are prepared to go through in pursuit of this horrible but highly lucrative trade.

There are indeed lessons to be learned from these examples. First, the seizure of these consignments would not have been possible without the South African police and the German customs service gathering excellent intelligence. Secondly, the successful conclusion might not have been possible without the willingness of the South African police and the German customs service to share their highly sensitive intelligence with their Namibian counterparts.

These examples further illustrate that it is only through the sharing of vital information that we can together win the fight against these highly organized criminals. The intelligence gathered by the Namibian Drug Law Enforcement Unit indicates that lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), ecstasy and heroin are also beginning to appear in Namibia. More in depth investigation of this issue continues.

Permit me to say few words regarding commitment and principles calling for actions, as stipulated in the draft Declaration. The Ministry of Health and Social Services of the Republic of Namibia, especially the Department of Welfare Services, in collaboration with community-based groups such as the Drug Action Group and Teenagers Against Drug Abuse, is making efforts to implement these policies through articulated actions such as preventing the use of drugs and reducing the adverse consequences of drug abuse; encouraging active and coordinated participation by individuals at the community level, both generally and in situations of particular risk; and contributing to the relevant development and sustenance of supportive environments.

Let me place on record our profound appreciation to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for having made it possible for us to come together in order to find common strategies to combat drug abuse and trafficking. It is therefore imperative that we unite and speak with one voice and declare war on the perpetrators of these evil acts, wherever they are. We can and must stop the trafficking of drugs and related crimes from continuing unabated into the next millennium. We cannot and must not allow the future of humanity to be threatened by condoning the destruction of the present. We owe it to ourselves. The drug lords pursue this social and economic ill with the determination to destroy. We must strive with the necessary political will to preserve the life and dignity of mankind.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister for Home Affairs of Namibia for his statement.

(spoke in French)

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Magnhild Meltveit Kleppa, Minister for Social Affairs of Norway.

Ms. Meltveit Kleppa (Norway): International cooperation is one the main pillars of Norway's comprehensive approach to the drug abuse problem. We therefore welcome this special session of the General Assembly.

Norway fully supports the draft Political Declaration. We expect that it, along with the other documents before us, will give an important impetus to our common efforts to combat, and one day overcome, the problem of drugs. The draft documents will constitute a valuable supplement to the already existing United Nations instruments in the field of drug abuse control.

One of the significant achievements of this special session is to put drug prevention and the rehabilitation of drug addicts higher on the international political agenda. Allow me to welcome in particular the draft Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. Hopefully it will become a fundamental instrument in an effective global strategy towards reducing the demand for drugs.

Illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs does not recognize national borders. We are witnessing rapid changes of drug abuse and production patterns. This makes international cooperation more urgent than ever. I am confident that this special session will prove to be an important milestone for reinforced cooperation at the global level.

Cooperation at the regional and subregional levels is also important. In this context I am very pleased with the constructive Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation, including in the preparations for this special session.

A global approach to combating drug problems will not succeed unless we all join forces. We must actively look for partners outside our governmental circles. Partners and allies will have to be sought out among non-governmental organizations, parents and civil society in general. I am pleased to note the positive outcome of the Youth Conference in Banff, Canada, this April. We must recognize youth as an important resource. Young people are a source of knowledge and advice, not only a target group for preventive efforts.

Norway has for many years been a major donor to the United Nations drug programmes. My Government is increasing its development assistance through United Nations organizations to alcohol and drug-related programmes. We will give high priority to this area. It is our aim to further integrate a drug dimension into our general development aid programme. Such increased efforts should also be seen in the context of strengthening Norwegian development aid to the health sector. Norway fully supports the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the commitment of its Executive Director.

We also recognize the important roles played by a range of other United Nations organizations engaged in drug-abuse control, such as the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization, as well as the collective efforts of the United Nations system as laid down in the System-wide Action Plan. Furthermore, let me point to the pressing need for broadening the funding base of UNDCP. A small number of countries still bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden. There is also a need for the recipient countries themselves to give a higher priority to drug-related programmes as part of their general development efforts.

Let me underline the efforts made at the national level. The Norwegian Government is giving and will continue to give high priority to an active alcohol and drugs policy. The Cabinet last month submitted to Parliament a draft Action Plan to Reduce the Use of Alcohol and Narcotic Drugs. Recent research has fully documented the links between the abuse of alcohol, legally prescribed drugs and illicit drugs. We should also stress the importance of parents as role models for their children with regard to drinking and drug-taking habits. We will therefore give more emphasis to cooperation with parents. We will strengthen drug education in schools, while at the same time intensifying care and after-care for drug addicts. In Norway we know through experience the importance of carefully controlling the marketing of pharmaceuticals, alcohol and tobacco. Let me also point to the vital role of the police and customs authorities in our total preventive efforts.

The global drug abuse situation has deteriorated. The Declaration which we will adopt tomorrow says it in very clear words: drugs kill and destroy lives. This calls for concerted and reinforced action rather than resignation. The debate so far reflects that this view has wide support. Both the individual and society at large have a right to expect us all to do our utmost to protect

them from the scourge of drug abuse. A global approach involves each and every one of us. And as the final words of the Declaration say, "Together we can meet this challenge."

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the Minister for Social Affairs of Norway for her statement.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. John O'Donoghue, Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform of Ireland.

Mr. O'Donoghue (Ireland): I have the honour of addressing the General Assembly at this special session on behalf of Ireland. I would like to commend the excellent work of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, under its able Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi, in seeking to bring about comprehensive strategies to rid the world of the scourge of drugs. I would also like to commend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the preparatory work which has been done for this special session.

Drug abuse and the illicit production of and trafficking in drugs constitute one of the most serious threats facing the international community today. Drugs destroy lives, ravage families and communities and lead to social instability. Not only is drug-trafficking a crime in itself, but drug abuse fuels a great deal of "ordinary" crime. None of our societies is immune to the effects of drug abuse, and the majority of people find that their own lives or those of other people close to them are damaged by its consequences.

The presence of so many world leaders and so many of my colleagues here at the General Assembly this week clearly shows the importance which we attach to the development of coordinated actions and strategies to deal with all aspects of the drug problem. We must move forward and continue in the battle against drugs, and we must succeed. In order to do this, it is vital that we attach equal importance to supply and demand reduction.

We must match the threat of drugs with the appropriate response at the domestic and international levels. In relation to the supply side, the Irish Government has taken appropriate measures to counteract this menace. In 1996 we passed a Proceeds of Crime Act and set up a Criminal Assets Bureau, and both play a major part in our fight against drugs.

The Criminal Assets Bureau, which is a multi-agency body, draws its staff from the police, revenue and social services. The Bureau has the objective of identifying assets which are likely to be the proceeds of crime and taking court action to have them confiscated. Since its establishment, the Criminal Assets Bureau has been successful in freezing suspect assets and in driving major criminals out of business. The "untouchables" are no longer untouchable. I am at present promoting legislation in my Parliament which provides for a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years' imprisonment for drug dealers caught in possession of drugs with a market value of 10,000 Irish pounds — that is, approximately $15,000 — or more.

Drug-trafficking is ultimately about making huge profits, and it is undoubtedly the loss of these profits, together with the loss of their freedom, that the drug dealers fear most of all. We must implement the measures necessary to ensure that the criminals do not enjoy the benefits of their ill-gotten gains, and we must do so through enhancing international cooperation.

The Irish Government is aware that drug abuse cannot be defeated by law enforcement measures alone, and it is committed to a multi-agency, multidisciplinary, partnership approach. It is in this light that we attach great importance to the work already done by the United Nations, in particular pursuant to the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

My Government therefore warmly welcomes the opportunity at this session to support the draft political declaration and the adoption of guiding principles of drug demand reduction. In keeping with the guiding principles, demand reduction strategies in Ireland focus on a community-wide participatory and partnership approach in assessing both the nature and the extent of the drug problem and in the development and implementation of appropriate policies and programmes. Full involvement by the communities most ravaged by drugs has been made a crucial element in the overall successful implementation of drug demand reduction policies.

We would call on the United Nations, the Council of Europe Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs — the Pompidou Group — the World Health Organization and other international organizations involved in the fight against drugs to continue collaboration and the forging of links between various programmes and initiatives. We must not

forget the importance of alternative development in dealing with the problem of root crop production and in this regard the importance of offering viable alternative livelihoods to those engaged in this production, who quite often are already among the poorest in their societies.

As I have said earlier, drug-trafficking poses a serious threat to the international community today. Drug traffickers recognize no borders and use the opportunities provided by the dismantling of borders to further pursue their illicit and heinous trade. The international community must work together to defeat the drug barons and the criminal gangs.

The battle against drugs is a global one, and responsibility does not lie with one country or region alone. We need to cooperate to meet the challenge, in partnership and with determination. A significant step in our cooperation will be shown by our ability to agree at this special session on a series of draft resolutions that comprehensively tackle the complex and difficult issues involved in the global fight against drugs. We will adopt proposals which will improve our action against money-laundering, strengthen judicial cooperation, tackle the illicit trade in chemical precursors and the menace of amphetamine-type stimulants, and help to provide an alternative income and livelihood for those who rely on illicit drug cultivation for their living. The adoption of these proposals will represent a significant milestone in our shared goal of a drug free world.

I particularly welcome the proposals which we are about to adopt in regard to so-called designer drugs. The international community must give itself the means to deal with the problem posed by emerging new drugs and new trends in this area. This is the only way in which we can protect our children from this growing and widespread menace.

Ireland has shown that it is prepared to live up to its national and international responsibilities in the fight against drugs. The Irish Government is committed to introducing the necessary legislative measures and to cooperation with our European Union and international partners, and we will not relent in combating drugs. The time is ripe for a truly global response to the problem of drugs. This special session points the way forward by giving us an updated and comprehensive approach. Our presence here provides a new stimulus to our work. For the sake of our peoples, and particularly our young people, let us follow the right path.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform of Ireland for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Masahiko Komura, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Komura (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English text furnished by the delegation*): Today, drugs are a critical problem. Because the problem is global in scale, the international community must be united in addressing it. Two trends are particularly alarming. First, all over the world in recent years, the age at which drug abuse begins has been falling; and secondly, to the abuse of heroin and cocaine has been added abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants. There is no question that humankind must confront the drug problem as one of its highest priorities as we move towards the twenty-first century.

First of all, since drug crime is typically organized crime, we must take comprehensive measures against both. In particular, it is of vital importance that the law be strictly enforced if we are to cut off the supply of drugs.

On the other hand, in order to prevent drug abuse, appropriate countermeasures are needed on the demand side. Comprehensive steps are necessary, such as strict enforcement of the law with respect to end users, along with education, treatment and rehabilitation. Especially important are education about drug abuse and activities to raise awareness among youth.

In my own country, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse, which is headed by the Prime Minister, recently announced a five-year strategy for the prevention of drug abuse, which is to serve as a set of guidelines for medium-term measures in this area. Japan believes that among the many kinds of measures mentioned in the strategy, it is the countermeasures against amphetamine-type stimulants and drug abuse among youth that are of the greatest importance, and it appeals to all participants in this special session to focus particular attention on these two problems.

First, because they can be manufactured so easily and inexpensively, amphetamine-type stimulants have rapidly spread worldwide, replacing or being used in addition to other drugs. Amphetamine-type stimulants are

no less harmful than other drugs such as heroin or cocaine, and some have suggested that they will be the principal problem drugs of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the danger they pose has not been widely recognized because it is only very recently that the problem has begun to spread so rapidly. Accordingly, abuse of this type of drug is of special concern.

If I may say a word about the situation in Japan, the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants is now the principal drug problem. Particularly in recent years, we have observed changes in the nature of this trend, namely that amphetamine-type stimulant drugs are now finding popularity among younger users and are becoming easier to obtain. It is believed, for this and other reasons, that drug abuse in Japan has entered a new phase, which has come to be called the third period of stimulant abuse.

Turning next to measures relating to youth, the importance of education in curbing the demand for drugs cannot be overstated. Our young people, after all, will be responsible for the future of humankind. In order to protect them from the harm that illicit drugs can do, it goes without saying that education and activities to raise their awareness are needed. Only in this way will young people gain the proper understanding that will deter them from abusing drugs.

Examples in Japan of activities of this kind are the drug abuse prevention classes that are held in schools, which are often addressed by experts such as police officers, and the "No! Absolutely No!" campaign being conducted by our Drug Abuse Prevention Centre. These activities have already produced significant results.

Resolving the drug problem will require international cooperation. As noted in our five-year strategy for the prevention of drug abuse, Japan has been promoting every possible form of cooperation with other countries. At the heart of Japan's cooperation is its support for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which plays the central role in the fight against drugs.

To begin with, Japan has extended its sponsorship to the operationalization of the action plan on amphetamine-type stimulants in the Far East/South-East Asia region. Recently, in addition to the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy and the illegal manufacture of heroin, the illegal manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants has made great inroads in the region. The action plan on amphetamine-type stimulants is a project launched by UNDCP to deal with this problem.

Secondly, allow me to touch on Japan's assistance to an ongoing project in Myanmar. Carried out for some time now in the Wa region in the northeastern part of that country, this is an effort to develop alternative crops as a substitute for the opium poppy.

In addition, together with UNDCP and the Government of Myanmar as co-organizers, Japan convened the seminar on alternative development programmes this April in Yangon, also with the objective of promoting the development of alternative crops as substitutes for the opium poppy in Myanmar and neighbouring countries.

Japan is also encouraged by the report that the six countries of South-East Asia that have concluded a memorandum of understanding with UNDCP are issuing a joint statement during this special session.

Thirdly, Japan is continuing its cooperation with other countries in the field of law enforcement. In view of the fact that drug-related crimes are the hallmarks of international organized crime, international cooperation among enforcement organizations such as the police and customs services is essential. Japan therefore will endeavour to strengthen cooperation among countries at the working level, as well as the cooperation it provides through international organizations, and it will also intensify the exchange of information in this field.

Further, I wish to mention the Asia Pacific training seminar on maritime drug law enforcement that was convened by the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency, together with UNDCP, last October in Yokohama, Japan. Japan will continue to organize this kind of training project with a view to enhancing maritime drug-law enforcement.

On the multilateral level, Japan provides financial assistance to the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States. And on the bilateral level, Japan, in cooperation with UNDCP, is planning to give aid to Myanmar to help it increase the production of food crops as alternatives to the poppy.

This special session has been convened for the purpose of formulating a new international strategy to prevent drug abuse as we move towards the twenty-first century. At the preparatory meetings leading up to this gathering, many issues relating to the Political Declaration and the six working documents were

discussed, and Japan expects that they will become the core of later comprehensive international measures to eliminate drug abuse the world over.

Indeed, Japan fervently hopes that drug abuse can be eradicated everywhere on earth as soon as possible.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Malkhaz Kakabadze, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mr. Kakabadze (Georgia): I am very pleased to have this opportunity to share my views on the situation concerning drug addiction and illicit drug-trafficking, regarding both current activities in Georgia and the improvement in international cooperation. During these two days we have heard a number of interesting opinions and proposals regarding the prevention of the problem. Every speaker has particularly stressed the necessity of closer and more efficient cooperation between the States of the international community.

I would like to quote President Shevardnadze:

> "The fight against drug addiction and illicit drug-trafficking is not a narrow national problem; it is a universal problem, and it has to be solved strictly in this century. Since we managed to overcome the cold-war problem, I suppose we can deal with drugs."

This citation belongs to a politician who did a lot to prevent the woeful consequences of the cold war and who, during the Soviet period, conducted a ruthless fight against the drug problem, at a time when the ideology of the existing central authorities camouflaged the problem and prohibited even mention of it. His efforts in many ways ensured Georgia's success in fighting drug addiction.

In Georgia's current criminal code, as well as in the new code that will be adopted very soon, there are significant provisions in connection with the fight against criminal offenses in this field. The new draft criminal code establishes an efficient and comprehensive normative basis which covers various transnational crimes.

We have not only to fight against the offenses but also to work for prevention. For the implementation of the normative acts, the national programme against illicit trafficking in drugs for 1998-2000 was adopted. It determines conceptually priorities, directions, methods and preventive measures. The National Security Council, the main consultative body of Georgia, and the State commission created specially for this purpose, regularly discuss the fight against illicit drugs.

Despite the difficult economic situation, positive steps have been made towards the building of an efficient frontier and coast-guard system. Here, I must mention the assistance that is being provided by the United States of America, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Ukraine and the International Organization for Migration.

To support cooperation between States, Georgia has already acceded to the various conventions in the field of fighting drugs. It intends to accede to other conventions as well.

I would like to underline our cooperation with the Pompidou Group within the Council of Europe, which fosters European cooperation in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

Notwithstanding these positive steps, we are deeply concerned by the present situation in Abkhazia, Georgia. I am not going to make a political analysis of the conflict. I would like to describe in brief the situation, which is, in my opinion, perilous as regards the transit of drugs. We possess enough information to confirm that through this uncontrolled territory, with the support of the separatist regime, the trafficking of huge amounts of drugs is taking place.

Unfortunately, there is a similar situation in other uncontrolled territories in many parts of the world. It is capable of inflicting twofold damage to the countries, particularly to the transit countries. On the one hand, if at the moment the rate of drug addiction is not very high in the countries referred to above, as transit States they may well become more active consumers of illicit drugs. On the other hand, the inefficiency of mechanisms for the fight against drugs will make it possible for cartels organizing the smuggling of drugs to develop new markets and launder money to recycle their illicit proceeds through legitimate businesses. It should be mentioned that, even if the local forces could uncover the facts of drug use, the trafficking itself is almost invisible, and that makes it even more difficult to fight without joint efforts.

For this very reason, the continuation of illegal activities on the part of separatists can have very grave consequences for Georgia and the international community as a whole. Regrettably, the steps taken by the Security Council to resolve the conflict have so far yielded no practical results.

Illicit trafficking in drugs belongs to the category of crimes that can affect the entire international community. Therefore, we attach great importance to international cooperation in this field, and particularly on the regional level. In this regard, I would like to underline certain trade and other economic relationships that are taking place in this region.

Georgia is one of the creators of and active participants in the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) project. The project provides for the development of west-east transport corridors through the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the seaports, railways and highways. Its final goal is to establish the shortest and most profitable route between Asia and Europe. It is important that this project is being carried out under the aegis of the European Union and with its full support.

We have to take into consideration the most important projects, such as the construction of the pipeline and the reinstatement of the Silk Road.

The Black Sea region, whose role is growing in terms of developing trade and economic relations between Asia and Europe, is one of the most important conduits. At the initiative of the President of Georgia, we also intend to promote mutual activities within the framework of this Organization. The Black Sea region must become a security zone, where it will be impossible for drug dealers to cross.

We have to realize that the activities carried out today regarding the establishment of efficient mechanisms will help us prevent the danger of the destruction of society tomorrow.

It is not my intention to raise in detail the question of the assistance that is still necessary for Georgia in the fight against drug addiction and illicit trafficking. Every country has to contribute to this goal and, in this regard, let me welcome the initiative of the Government of the United States, set out in President Clinton's address, concerning the intention to launch in New Mexico an international training course on reducing drug demand and to assist interested Governments in curbing this problem.

Let me assure the Assembly that Georgia, as an integral part of the international community, will do its best to help solve the problem.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

(spoke in English)

I now give the floor to His Excellency Dato Paduka Haji Abidin Abdul Rashid, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs of Brunei Darussalam.

Dato Abdul Rashid (Brunei Darussalam): Let me begin by joining those who spoke before me in expressing our congratulations to the President of this special session on his election. With his able leadership and vast experience, I am confident that this session will reach a successful conclusion. May I also convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General and his staff for their relentless efforts in preparing the necessary documents which provide us with very useful information in our deliberations.

The issue of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is a global concern. It threatens human values and social structures and jeopardizes the security and stability of nations. Every one of us is aware that drug abuse and trafficking recognize no nation's boundaries, cultural differences, political ideologies or economic development. There is no single country which will be able to handle the problem single-handedly. Thus, collective efforts are necessary in addressing and tackling the problem.

My delegation welcomes the convening of this special session. No doubt this will further affirm the solidarity of international cooperation in combating the drug menace.

This is not the first time we have met to address the problem of drug abuse. In 1990, the seventeenth special session was convened to address a similar problem. At that session, a Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action on international cooperation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances were adopted. The strategy was to take us to the year 2000. With improvements in the quality of life, coupled with technological advancement and the introduction of synthetic drugs such as amphetamine-type stimulants, the

adoption of new strategies and techniques for combating the problem are required. We are confident that this special session will come up with the required strategies which can be implemented well into the next millennium.

The problem of drug abuse exists in Brunei Darussalam though the magnitude is still comparatively small. Brunei Darussalam is primarily a consumer country in which the youth is normally the main target group for the traffickers. Realizing this trend, we have enhanced our efforts in the area of demand reduction, especially in primary prevention, with the aim of discouraging the young generation from being attracted to drugs. We support the guiding principles of demand reduction to be considered in this session. We believe this is a systematic approach to reducing demand for illicit drugs.

Brunei Darussalam takes the problem seriously and joins the international community in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking. We are signatories to all the international conventions against drug abuse, namely, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. We participate in international and regional activities and are committed to fulfil our obligations under the international drug treaties. Like many nations in our region, Brunei Darussalam has tough laws and stringent approaches towards law enforcement. However, we adopt a social approach to drug abusers.

We support international strategies to give equal emphasis in the reduction of demand for and supply of illicit drugs.

We also believe the United Nations can play a crucial role in combating the drug menace through a global programme of action. We hope that this can be achieved collectively at this session.

We all agree that the fight against drug abuse is undoubtedly a difficult and daunting task. We join our voice to those of other delegations to work together to ensure effective implementation of the plan of action.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate Brunei Darussalam's commitment to the United Nations efforts in the fight against drug abuse and related activities.

The Acting President: I thank the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs of Brunei Darussalam for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Makarim Wibisono, Chairman of the delegation of Indonesia.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): This special session is a very important and timely forum devoted to countering the world drug problem. A number of meaningful remarks have been introduced since yesterday by many distinguished heads of State and Government, as well as other delegations. In this context, Indonesia joins in fully supporting the emphasis that has been given to demand reduction, including prevention and rehabilitation, and we commit ourselves to implementing illicit drug prevention activities.

We believe that the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) must continue to play a pivotal role in the global struggle. Its approach to reduce illicit cultivation by the year 2008 deserves our full support, and Indonesia joins in supporting the adoption of the action plan on the eradication of illicit drug crops, which encompasses a variety of approaches, including alternative development. UNDCP, in cooperation with other related organizations, should give assistance to affected countries and work to maintain international cooperation in order to improve the conditions of affected groups through such means as integrated rural development. For that purpose, UNDCP should also continue its catalytic role aimed at financing and supporting alternative development and projects in those fields.

Indonesia is also very concerned about money-laundering and other serious drug-related crimes, which have expanded internationally. We are determined to adopt the necessary measures to make money-laundering a punishable offence, in support of the global fight against illicit drug-trafficking.

I now have the honour to address this special session on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The international community has consistently expressed its commitment and determination to put an end to the drug problem. We view this special session as an important link between the considerable progress made and the evolving needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. We recognize the need to adapt current approaches to new trends, such as the use of synthetic drugs. We recognize the need to set definite goals and time-frames for action and for implementing the programmes that have been so eloquently supported in this forum.

We must now work to close the gap between problem identification and problem resolution. The Group believes that the relevant bodies within the United Nations system, such as the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the UNDCP, must receive the support necessary to fully and effectively implement their mandates and act as catalytic forces for action. We welcome the strengthening of the United Nations anti-drug capacity, as only through United Nations-driven action can we avoid drifting into interventionist, short-term solutions and better implement a multilateral programme that is founded on the principle of shared responsibility, coordination of action and equality among States.

The Group has always cautioned against the ever-present temptation to embark on a campaign against the drug supply without also devoting substantial resources to reducing demand, which, fundamentally, is the driving force of the drug problem. Any effort aimed at demand reduction should be multifaceted and include not only education, prevention and public-information campaigns, but also a strong effort for rehabilitation and social reintegration for those who have succumbed to drug abuse. We therefore support the adoption of the draft Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction.

At the same time, we welcome the timely Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors, which will contribute to attaining a truly balanced and comprehensive approach. The Group also joins in supporting the UNDCP's global effort to eliminate illicit crops and to end such cultivation in the near future. We strongly underline in this regard that alternative development must always be made a priority in which crop substitution is accompanied by programmes aimed at the full integration into society of those social groups involved in such activity, through comprehensive development programmes.

In addressing the illicit drug problem in its entirety, we cannot escape the dimension of poverty. For it is abject poverty and the despair it nurtures which perpetuates the drug trade and the abuse of narcotics, and it is grappling with the consequences of poverty which prevents many of the developing countries from fully participating in solutions. The desperate plight of the developing countries becomes even more evident and more tragic when we consider that the revenue from the illegal drug trade is nearly 10 times the level of official development assistance. And while the illicit drugs trade continues to prosper, that assistance continues its downward spiral. We cannot stress enough the vital importance of the development dimension and the role that poverty and socio-economic exclusion play in illicit activities such as the cultivation of illicit crops. We therefore welcome the draft Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and Alternative Development, which is a positive framework for international and national responses. We only hope that it will pass the test of time and be fully implemented.

Likewise, at the national and international levels, not only should attention be directed at illicit activities carried out by the poor, but efforts should also be made to deny the profits generated through the money-laundering industry, which should figure prominently in any new strategy. The advent of globalization, with the advance of trade liberalization and free-trade zones, has made this problem more difficult than ever to address. Current estimates indicate that approximately $2 trillion dollars cross the globe every day, which presents an untold opportunity for organized crime syndicates. We need to adopt additional measures to address this trend, which, if left unchecked, will continue to pose a threat to the international financial and trading systems and continue to provide vast financial resources to international drug cartels.

The Group therefore joins in urging full implementation of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, particularly those provisions against money-laundering. Furthermore, we look to the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention to provide, within the framework of its global programme against money-laundering, the necessary training, advice and technical assistance to the Member States, on their request. To ensure a universal application of the 1988 Convention, we would strongly encourage all States to sign the Convention and to display their political will to combat illicit drugs by cooperating in its implementation.

Before concluding, the Group would stress the importance of strengthening the functioning and governance of the drug-control bodies of the United Nations system, and ensuring in particular the adequate funding of the UNDCP as a key body for multilateral advocacy. Moreover, particular attention is directed to the importance of strengthening coordination within the United Nations system, such as in the area of international and national training programmes and with respect to the need to make the system-wide Action Plan

an effective mechanism of coordination of activities, and not merely problem definition.

The Group has no misconception of the magnitude of the problems faced and the difficult road that lies ahead in our common efforts to implement an effective and forceful anti-drug strategy. Nevertheless, we recognize that while some countries in this Assembly are more directly affected and challenged, none of us are immune. The illicit drug trade continues to spread like a cancer through our international community. The Group therefore lends its full support to implementing the elements of the new Political Declaration which this Assembly will soon adopt, as well as to the several new action plans. Now, together, we will build on the foundation of the past and shape an effective action-oriented strategy for lasting and positive change.

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Indonesia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Felipe Mabilangan, Chairman of the delegation of the Philippines.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The Philippines joins the world community in welcoming the holding of this historic special session, which is a reaffirmation and declaration of our strong commitment to work jointly to counter the world drug problem. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission and his Bureau for the thoroughness and dedication with which they conducted the Preparatory Commission meetings. We likewise acknowledge the role of Mexico for its initiative leading to the convening of this special session.

The Philippine delegation congratulates Mr. Pino Arlacchi, the new head of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, for the strides he has made since he assumed office and for the direction he has set for United Nations Member States in addressing the drug problem.

Concerned about the continuing threat posed by the abuse of dangerous drugs, the Philippines joins the international community in demanding swift action programmes against the spread of this scourge in all its aspects.

The Philippine Government fully endorses the Joint Declaration issued by six countries in the Asia-Pacific region — Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam -- on the 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control. This Joint Declaration best expresses the deepest determination of the Filipino people to rid all generations of the deadly drug scourge. Specifically, the Government of the Philippines fully supports the draft Declarations and Plans of Action prepared by the Preparatory Committee.

We believe that the political statement is an important instrument for raising awareness and engaging decision makers, media, youth and the public in combating the world drug problem. We also support the draft Declaration which, for the first time, focuses on the demand reduction side of a comprehensive strategy against dangerous drugs.

The Philippines welcomes the adoption of an Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and Alternative Development. It agrees with the view that law enforcement efforts to eradicate illicit drug crops have to be combined with effective alternative development programmes and a balanced approach in allocating resources for the reduction of both illicit demand and illicit supply. The *sine qua non* for the success of this approach, however, is financial assistance. Without sufficient funds, the marketplace will dictate the crop of choice for small-time cultivation, despite all the moral arguments that are put forward.

The Philippines considers the Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors an important pillar in the concerted fight against the drug problem. In this respect, equal attention should be given to awareness raising, demand reduction, supply reduction and control of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors.

With regard to the Internet and computer software, my delegation proposes that the action plan be more proactive, as originally intended in the action plan presented to the Preparatory Commission, in the promotion of healthy lifestyles. It is our youth who are most affected by this phenomenon and will eventually sustain whatever our generation may initiate.

We welcome the action plan on measures to promote judicial cooperation. We are currently reviewing our laws, especially those on bank secrecy and extradition, in order to address the world drug problem from all angles. In fact, we have legislation pending on money-laundering. We support bilateral, subregional and regional arrangements to this end. We also support the proposal to elaborate a comprehensive international legal

instrument against transnational organized crime, which plays a central role in promoting illegal drug use and its attendant activities.

We have long recognized the drug menace as the cause of a rising crime wave that claims lives, poses serious challenges to the social structure of society and destroys property. We also realize its negative effects on democratic institutions and the stability of nations. We know it retards economic development and undermines the public faith in government's ability to maintain peace and order. It is thus not surprising that we have reimposed the death penalty for certain heinous crimes which arise from violations of drug laws covering illicit trafficking, drug abuse and the illegal manufacture, sale and possession of dangerous drugs.

We are also strengthening and expanding our multisectoral approach in the country's anti-drug campaign by involving more public and private agencies and institutions. Apart from existing extradition treaties, the Philippines is also considering similar extradition arrangements with China, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Pakistan and India. Furthermore, our efforts are geared towards drug supply control, preventive education, public information, research, regulation of rehabilitation and treatment centres, and regional and international cooperation.

With regard to money-laundering, we view this as a critical part in the fight against the world drug problem. All Governments have to come together in the spirit of true cooperation and transparency in order to plug all the loopholes being exploited by drug cartels.

The Philippines remains focused more than ever on waging war against all drug related problems. But we realize that political will by itself may not be enough to bring about a total victory. For illicit drugs transcend national borders and they cannot be overcome without the cooperation of the rest of the world.

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Philippines for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Kamal, Chairman of the delegation of Pakistan.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): I have the honour to deliver this address on behalf of the Minister of the Interior of Pakistan, Chaudhry Shujat Hussain, who has unfortunately been taken suddenly unwell.

It is a privilege for me to address the General Assembly on one of the major problems facing humanity. The drug problem today is not a problem specific to any individual country. It is a transnational problem requiring a global approach.

After taking over in 1997, the new Government in Pakistan passed comprehensive drug legislation. Today, the administration of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif takes pride in announcing that all heroin laboratories have been destroyed. The head of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Mr. Pino Arlacchi, in his letter of April 1998 to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, praised the Government of Pakistan for what he describes as "bold and historic steps" in fighting the drug problem in "a direct and robust manner". He further said that

> "the international community will be able to look to Pakistan as a showcase of how the problem of illicit narcotics cultivation can be tackled and defeated."

Our steps to face the drug menace within and to check its outflow abroad include having active members of the military in the anti-narcotics force to combat drug crime; raising the annual budget of the anti-narcotics programme by 20 per cent; introducing capital punishment for drug offenders; and moving towards adopting a comprehensive narcotics master plan.

Pakistan remains one of the biggest casualties of the drug culture, trapping four million addicts. It has been identified in a UNDCP note as a country hardest hit by the narcotics problem. Our society's well-being depends upon the elimination of this curse. We have seen the destruction caused in the developed and developing countries alike by the abuse of drugs.

The globalization of the drug problem demands that the battle be fought in homes, schools, mosques, churches and all arenas of public and civic activity. It is simple to shift the blame on others. It is a matter of achieving a common goal and sharing responsibilities.

Consuming, transit and producing countries should all work together. Equal emphasis should be placed on the reduction of demand and the stiffening of penalties. This is a human issue and not a political issue. Hence, there should be little room for double standards. The approach towards law enforcement and penalties needS full rethinking. It is odd to see that strong punishment is urged in the developing countries when, in the

industrialized countries, there is a relatively more lenient view of the drug problem under the cover of individual freedom.

Drugs also present a moral challenge. The drug menace is the mother of many social, cultural and economic ills. Religious and moral teachings should be key elements of the plan to keep youth free from drugs.

The drug culture has no boundaries. It makes victims of us all. We need to take a very powerful stand against the culture that highlights drugs on television and in movies. There is nothing romantic about the huge damage that drugs cause to men, women and our children. The drug danger is becoming critical as we enter the twenty-first century.

The Government of Pakistan has decided to fight the drug danger on a war footing. Our narcotics control staff, including active-duty members of the military, deserve praise for doing a dangerous job well.

The donor countries deserve thanks for their help and support. We hope that they will maintain their commitment despite political pressures.

Today, Pakistan faces the double danger of a large neighbour showing off its weapons of mass destruction and the head of that Government proudly proclaiming that it is now a nuclear-weapon State. This, and the mild response of the West, left Pakistan with no option but to choose the path of self-defence.

Our faith lies in the people of Pakistan. Time and again, they have proved their courage to overcome all challenges. We want to assure the world community that we shall not let the nuclear dangers sidetrack our battle against the narcotics threat. Now is the time for those who are serious and sincere about the future of humanity to unite and fight against this deadly modern plague. *Inshallah*, we shall prevail.

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Pakistan for his statement.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.